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ABSTRACT

In this study 50 black students from an all black liberal arts college in North Carolina and 48 white students from a branch of the University of North Carolina were each asked to respond twice to 30 belief items--once according to the way he felt they should be ranked, and then "as he felt someone of the other race, black or white, would respond." The belief items fell into five categories of social concerns: poverty, race, welfare, employment, and social conflict. This was administered along with a scale of 12 terminal values developed by Rokeach. Blacks ranked freedom first and equality second; whites ranked freedom and equality fifth. Blacks ranked a comfortable life fourth, and whites twelfth. The greatest differences between groups existed in the items dealing with employment, race, and poverty, but a far greater difference emerged in the whites' views of blacks and the blacks' view of whites. Significant differences for all five attitudes became evident when the perceived attitudes of the races were compared. Data also showed a significant relationship between values and beliefs, i.e., those who ranked freedom and equality high had more liberal scores than those who ranked freedom high and equality low (Rokeach two-dimensional model was used). Tables with test data and a sample of the measuring instrument are appended. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (KG)

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Actual and Perceived Beliefs of Black and White Students

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The current social environment which provides a context for the educational system is an environment in a rapid state of change. Much has been said and written about the various racial groups which serve as the actors in this social arena. Whites and blacks have probably drawn the most attention, and researchers have focused on a multitude of variables in an attempt to ascertain similarities and differences between the two groups.

The present study is an attempt to study a group of blacks and whites in terms of a model of attitudes, values, and beliefs proposed by Rokeach.

The first topic will be to describe briefly the conceptual model which underlies this study. The three central concepts are beliefs, attitudes, and values. Beliefs are the "building blocks" for attitudes and values. "A belief is any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase 'I believe that...'" (p. 113) A belief may describe the objects of belief as good or bad, true or false, correct or incorrect, or in the case of a course of action or state of existence, proclaim it desirable or undesirable. Beliefs have cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. The totality of one's beliefs constitutes his belief system. Each belief can be said to vary on at least one dimension--a dimension of connectedness. This corresponds to a dimension of centrality--the most central belief being the one with the greatest number of functional connections with other beliefs. Conversely, the belief with a few number of connections is a non-central or peripheral belief. Examples of central beliefs are beliefs related to one's own identity and existence in the physical world. Examples of peripheral beliefs are beliefs that are considered by the individual to be more or less arbitrary matters of taste or style.

Attitudes are defined in terms of beliefs. An attitude is defined as "an organization of several beliefs focused on a specific object (physical or social, concrete or abstract) or situation, predisposing one to respond in a preferential manner." (p. 159)

Values on the other hand are simple beliefs "centrally located within one's total belief system, about how one ought or ought not to behave or about some end-state of existence worth or not worth attaining." (p. 124) Values, unlike attitudes, guide actions and judgements across a range of specific objects and situations. Further, values serve as imperatives to actions and as yardsticks by which actions and attitudes concerning oneself and others are evaluated.

Values can be considered to be either specific modes of conduct or specific end-states of existence. Values concerned with modes of conduct are called instrumental values and values concerned with end-states are called terminal values. Each of these types of values is assumed to be arranged hierarchically in terms of importance to form two separate but interconnected value systems. It is assumed that while individual differences in experience give rise to differences in the ordering of these values, these differences are restricted by cultural, institutional and social factors to a reasonably small number of dimensions. Therefore we would expect to find cultural differences reflected in different orderings of values in the value systems.

The behavior of this conceptual system is dependent on inputs concerning (1) the individual's own behavior, (2) the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavior of significant others, and (3) the behavior of physical objects. The assumed operating principle underlying the system is the consistency principle which assumes that the individual strives to maintain consistent

relations between attitudes, values, and beliefs. Inputs are processed in terms of their consistency or inconsistency with the elements in the A-B-V System. Inconsistency is the dynamic which leads the system to change or adapt.

This represents a rather simple-minded overview of the model. Applying this model to groups of individuals leads to some predictions which serve as the hypotheses of this study.

Hypotheses:

1. Individuals with different cultural backgrounds (i.e., in this case different races) would be expected to exhibit a different ranking of terminal values using the Rokeach value scale.
2. Difference in the rankings of values relevant to social issues would be expected to be accompanied by actual differences in attitudes concerning these social issues, where these attitudes are a combination of relevant beliefs and by differences in the perceived attitudes of each group by the other.
3. Rokeach posits two-dimensional value models using the rankings of Freedom and Equality to predict the direction of political views. Applying this scheme to predict attitudes toward social issues, it would be expected that those ranking both Freedom and Equality high would have more liberal scores than would those who ranked Freedom high and Equality low.
4. By virtue of the consistency principle, it would be expected that those ranking Freedom and Equality high would have smaller discrepancies between their scores and their perception of the scores of someone of the other race than those ranking Freedom high and Equality low.

Procedure:

In order to test these hypotheses a brief measure was constructed in accordance with the procedures for a Thurstone scale. Two modifications of this procedure were that a relatively small number of items constituted the initial item pool, and that only 10 judges were used to sort the items into categories which yielded the item weights. The instrument consisted of 30 belief items falling into 5 categories of social concerns: poverty, race, welfare, employment, and social conflict. This was administered along with a scale of 12 terminal values developed by Rokeach.

The S's for the study were 50 black students from an all black Liberal Arts college in North Carolina and 48 white students from a branch of the state university system of North Carolina, which although officially integrated has a relatively small percentage of black students.

Each subject was asked to respond to the belief items and rank the values twice: once according to the way he felt they should be ranked; then "as he felt someone of the other race, black or white, whichever was different, would respond." We then have two total scores for each individual, one representing his actual beliefs and the other his perception of the beliefs of an imagined individual of the other race.

In scoring the belief instrument the Eysenck-Crown scale-product method was used. This amounted to multiplying the individual item weights by the extent of agreement or disagreement and then summing these products across items. For each subject we have an actual and a perceived belief score; two sets of subtest scores for the five attitude areas and two sets of rankings of the value items.

Results:

The rankings of the values appear in Table 1. It can be seen from an observation of these rankings that there are differences. No statistical comparison was made to test this hypothesis. In terms of the model the differences in rankings of Freedom and Equality seem most significant. Blacks rank Freedom first and Equality second, on the average. Whites rank Freedom first and Equality fifth. For political attitudes Rokeach found that those ranking Freedom and Equality high were more liberal than those ranking Freedom high and Equality low. Since blacks might be expected to be more liberal than whites as a group, the obtained rankings are those which would be predicted by the model.

Another provocative comparison is in the ranking of Comfortable Life. Blacks rank it fourth and whites rank it twelth. It would be expected that the average economic level of the two groups would be different with the whites being more affluent. If this is the case, the blacks have had to be more concerned with comfort needs. Thus, not taking comfort for granted they see this as more important than the whites whose comfort needs are more adequately met.

Hypothesis two predicted differences in actual and perceived total belief scores and actual and perceived attitude scores for the two groups. Table 2 summarizes these scores.

The mean score for the blacks was 289; the mean for the whites was 342. This difference is significant at the .01 level. The most conservative possible score is 609 and the most liberal possible is 121. Thus, the score for the blacks would be considered liberal and the whites slightly liberal.

To further analyze the differences in the scores we can look at the individual attitude scores for the two groups. The greatest differences between the groups exist in the items dealing with employment, race, and poverty. Items dealing with social conflict showed no actual group differences and items dealing with welfare showed slight, non-significant differences. However, when we examine whites' views of blacks and the blacks' views of whites we see that these actual differences are magnified. There are significant differences for all five attitudes when the perceived attitudes of the races are compared. The areas of agreement in the actual attitudes disappear when the perceived attitudes are considered.

Hypothesis three represents a more specific test of the relationship between values and beliefs. It predicted that those who ranked Freedom high and Equality high (where high means 1, 2, or 3) would have more liberal scores than those ranking Freedom high and Equality low. Table 3 gives the mean total scores for these two groups.

The data support this hypothesis. Consistent with the Rokeach two-dimensional model those ranking Equality high and Freedom high have more liberal belief scores than those ranking Freedom high and Equality low. These differences are significant for three of the attitude categories: Race, Poverty, and Employment; and in the expected direction but non-significant for Welfare and Social Conflict.

Finally, hypothesis four testing the consistency principle by comparing the discrepancy scores yielded non-significant results. Instead, the data were consistently in the opposite direction with larger discrepancies being found for those ranking Freedom and Equality high than for those ranking Freedom high and Equality low. These data are found in Table 4.

Discussion:

In general, the data reported support the predictions made by the A-B-V model. As the predictions became more specific, the support for the model seemed to decrease, suggesting that more refinements are in order for the model to have substantial predictive value. The strongest support for the model comes in the support for hypothesis three concerning the relation between rankings of values and scores on the belief instrument. The two values of interest can be viewed as representing the four points of a compass. Rokeach defines the four points as follows: "The north pole represents those groups that place a high value on both Freedom and Equality, such as the liberal democrats, socialists, and humanists; the south pole represents those groups that place a low value on both Freedom and Equality such as the facists, Nazis, and Ku Klux Klan; to the east on the right are those groups that place a high value on Freedom and a low value on Equality such as the John Birch Society, conservative Republicans, and followers of Ayn Rand; finally to the west on the left are those groups that place a low value on Freedom and a high value on Equality such as the Stalinist or Mao type of Communism." (p. 171)

This study provided evidence concerning the north pole and an area between the origin and the east pole. This evidence provides support for the model even though the fourth hypothesis was not supported. An explanation for the reversal in the discrimination scores is being sought in terms of the differences between the blacks and whites as to the meaning of the term Equality. As yet, however, no satisfactory explanation of this finding has been found.

The most interesting result from the standpoint of implications for social action or educational policy is the greater difference in perceived

beliefs between blacks and whites than in actual beliefs. This says that for this sample neither group has a very accurate picture of the beliefs of the other group and the actual differences in beliefs between the two are considerably less than the perceived differences. What this finding implies for educational policy--I must leave to the educators. What the finding argues for educational research is that such a procedure as that used here seems to have merit in attempting to discover the frames of reference or belief patterns of different groups of individuals, whether blacks or whites, students or administrators, students or faculty. Such information might be useful as a source of variables of interest in evaluating the effects of desegregation on student attitudes and beliefs. One possible hypothesis is that school desegregation would tend to narrow the gap between actual belief differences and perceived belief differences as a result of more frequent social interactions among students. From this writer's viewpoint it does not seem likely or even particularly desirable that desegregation would obliterate the actual differences between whites and blacks. It does, however, seem desirable that individuals of each race develop more realistic views of each other--which would seem to be the first step to effective communication and meaningful interaction. Perhaps then, this technique would be useful in helping to evaluate the effects of school desegregation on student beliefs.

List of References

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Table 1. Ranking of Values

Blacks	Whites
Freedom	Freedom
Equality	Meaningful Life
Meaningful Life	World at Peace
Comfortable Life	True Friendship
World at Peace	Equality
Wisdom	Wisdom
Maturity	Respect from Others
Respect for Others	Respect for Others
Respect from Others	Salvation
Salvation	Maturity
True Friendship	National Security
National Security	Comfortable Life

Whites as Blacks	Blacks as Whites
Equality	Comfortable Life
Freedom	Meaningful Life
Respect from Others	Freedom
Meaningful Life	World at Peace
World at Peace	Wisdom
Comfortable Life	Equality
True Friendship	Respect from Others
Salvation	National Security
Respect for Others	Maturity
Wisdom	Respect for Others
Maturity	Salvation
National Security	True Friendship

Table 2. Mean Attitude and Total Scores--Actual and Perceived

Attitude Area	Black Actual	White Actual	Black Perceived	White Perceived
Race	48.44	61.77	68.75	44.85
Employment	40.72	60.79	69.43	44.33
Poverty	41.02	55.62	61.39	45.20
Social Conflict	59.44	59.91	75.39	50.68
Welfare	99.78	104.68	123.12	82.58
Total	289.40	342.77	398.06	267.64

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Groups Separated According to Value Rankings--Actual

Attitude Area	Freedom High Equality High		Freedom High Equality Low	
	M	Sd	M	Sd
Race	47.96	13.98	59.35	11.96
Employment	40.46	14.40	61.50	15.06
Poverty	40.36	10.43	54.50	12.51
Social Conflict	56.90	16.80	59.60	9.40
Welfare	94.16	22.06	102.85	16.87

Table 4. Mean Discrepancy Scores Between Actual and Perceived Attitudes

Attitude Area	Freedom High Equality High	Freedom High Equality Low
Race	24	18
Employment	33	19
Poverty	21	14
Social Conflict	19	11
Welfare	33	27

Table 5. Belief Instrument

Attitude Areas		Items					
P	1.	Poor people receive discriminatory treatment in the courts.	SA	A	U	D	SD
E	2.	Blacks should be given more favorable treatment in employment than whites to make up for past discrimination.	SA	A	U	D	SD
SC	3.	Breaking the law is not justified for any reason.	SA	A	U	D	SD
P	4.	Every man has the right to be guaranteed a decent standard of living.	SA	A	U	D	SD
P	5.	Most poor people are poor because they don't want to work.	SA	A	U	D	SD
E	6.	On the whole, jobs which the poor can obtain require more work and offer less in return.	SA	A	U	D	SD
W	7.	If a person receives welfare, any money he earns should be deducted from his welfare check.	SA	A	U	D	SD
E	8.	Unemployment among black teenagers is largely due to the fact that the only available jobs are "dead-end" jobs offering little hope for advancement.	SA	A	U	D	SD
SC	9.	Social conflict is healthy for society because it can lead to constructive change.	SA	A	U	D	SD
R	10.	If the existing institutions are not responsive to one's needs, he is justified in engaging in civil disobedience.	SA	A	U	D	SD

Table 5 (Cont.)

Attitude Areas		Items					
W	11.	Most of the families receiving welfare are headed by men who should be working.	SA	A	U	D	SD
W	12.	The present political structure can deal effectively with our major social problems.	SA	A	U	D	SD
SC	13.	The main reasons for riots in the ghettos are poor housing and lack of good jobs.	SA	A	U	D	SD
R	14.	"Black Power" is an instance of black racism.	SA	A	U	D	SD
R	15.	The greatest barrier to the advancement of black people is white racism.	SA	A	U	D	SD
W	16.	Everyone has the right to a guaranteed income.	SA	A	U	D	SD
W	17.	Anyone who requests welfare should receive it without having to have his need verified.	SA	A	U	D	SD
W	18.	Families given financial assistance should be free to spend the money for what they need to spend it for.	SA	A	U	D	SD
R	19.	Contributions of black people have received fair representation in most of our history books.	SA	A	U	D	SD
E	20.	The reason that there are fewer black supervisors is that few black workers would be capable supervisors.	SA	A	U	D	SD
R	21.	Roy Wilkins has done more for the black man than has Stokely Carmichael.	SA	A	U	D	SD

Table 5 (Cont.)

Attitude Areas		Item					
W	22.	The majority of those receiving welfare who are able to work do work.	SA	A	U	D	SD
W	23.	No able-bodied man should be given any sort of financial assistance.	SA	A	U	D	SD
E	24.	Basically whites and blacks look for the same factors in choosing jobs.	SA	A	U	D	SD
W	25.	Giving a person money kills his initiative.	SA	A	U	D	SD
SC	26.	Social conflict is always to be avoided.	SA	A	U	D	SD
P	27.	The poor should spend more time trying to obtain job skills and less time organizing and demonstrating.	SA	A	U	D	SD
P	28.	Poor blacks and poor whites should form a coalition to increase their bargaining power.	SA	A	U	D	SD
SC	29.	Anyone who advocates social conflict probably wants to overthrow the government.	SA	A	U	D	SD
E	30.	Qualified blacks have had as much chance as qualified whites to get jobs.	SA	A	U	D	SD

Code for Attitude Areas

R - Race

P - Poverty

E - Employment

SC - Social Conflict

W - Welfare